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Cal Poly College of Engineering Announces Faculty Awards and Outstanding Staff

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Cal Poly's College of Engineering recently announced the recipients of two industry-sponsored faculty awards and 2007 Outstanding Staff Awards.

Mechanical Engineering Professor Joseph D. Mello of Atascadero won the Northrop Grumman Excellence in Teaching Award. Materials Engineering Associate Professor Richard Savage of Atascadero received the Raytheon Excellence in Teaching and Applied Research Award.

Mello left an industrial career in the aerospace industry to join Cal Poly in 1998. Known for his advocacy for the undergraduate students, Mello has served as an advisor to the award-winning Cal Poly Society of Automotive Engineers for seven years. He has taught classes in everything from mechanical engineering fundamentals to advanced design, including machine design courses and the senior project capstone design experience.

Mello also has made significant curriculum contributions, developing an important and popular composite materials technical elective, a unique course that exposes undergraduates to complex materials. He also played a key role in a reorganization of ME design curriculum. Mello earned a bachelor's and a master's degree at Cal Poly and his Ph.D. from the University of California, Davis.

Savage joined Cal Poly in 2003 after more than 20 years in industry. He integrated project-based learning and design into materials engineering curriculum. In particular, Savage helped develop projects for the freshman introductory class, including the design, fabrication and characterization of vacuum systems and water purification systems powered by renewable energy. Savage also established a cornerstone course to initiate the senior design project sequence.

He strengthened the materials engineering graduate program by serving as coordinator and by introducing several advanced technology courses. In addition, Savage has undertaken numerous applied research projects. In 2006-07, he generated \$75,000 in project grants from Olympus alone, providing hands-on experience for many students, especially in the area of micro systems technology. Savage earned his Ph.D. in 1979 from Indiana University.

The college's 2007 Outstanding Staff Awards were given to Sondra Gorman from Paso Robles and Rhonda Walker from Arroyo Grande.

Gorman, the administrative assistant to the Biomedical and General Engineering Department, has been with Cal Poly for 20 years and is highly productive, supportive, sympathetic and considerate. She is credited with providing the procedural and process knowledge to successfully run a new and rapidly growing academic department.

Walker serves as an administrative assistant for the Computer Engineering Program, demonstrating a genuine enthusiasm to help students and faculty. Walker's contributions often fall outside of her regular responsibilities and regular working hours. She has been known to pay hotel accommodations for young students and their family members and has invited students unable to join their families to her home for Thanksgiving.

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